

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 11748 211139Z

45

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00

USIE-00 EB-07 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAM-01 ACDA-05 SCCT-01 AID-05

OMB-01 OPR-02 SCS-03 SCA-01 OC-05 CCO-00 A-01 DHA-02

SY-05 USSS-00 /112 W

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O P 211025ZSEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6294

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

USMISSION UN NEW YORK PRIORITY

USCINCEUR

DIA WASHDC

CIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 11748

GENEVA FOR SAUNDERS

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, LE

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SUBJECT: BEIRUT BEGINS TO BREATHE EASIER

REF: BEIRUT 11743

1. THE UNIVERSAL SIGH OF RELIEF IS ALMOST AUDIBLE AS BEIRUT WAKES UP FROM ITS FIRST REASONABLY QUIET NIGHT IN SEVERAL DAYS. THE CITY WAS NOT COMPLETELY QUIET DURING THE NIGHT, BUT FIGHTING WAS SPORADIC. THIS WAS DUE NO DOUBT PARTLY TO SHEER EXHAUSTION OF THE COMBATANTS AND DEPLETION OF AMMUNITION BUT ALSO TO A CEASEFIRE YET ANOTHER, ONE BUT THIS TIME ON A FIRMER BASIS ARRANGED TO START LAST EVENING, SEPTEMBER 20. THE CEASEFIRE IS STILL BEING RESPECTED AS OF 1100 HOURS (LOCAL) SEPTEMBER 21 DESPITE OCCASIONAL SMALL ARMS FIRE.

2. SYRIAN EMISSARIES KHADDAM AND SHEHABI GET MUCH OF THE CREDIT FOR THE BREAKTHROUGH, AS WELL FORMER LEBANESE PREMIER SAEB SALAAM WHO WORKED CLOSELY WITH THEM IN THEIR MEDIATION. THEY HELD A SERIES OF MEETINGS YESTERDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, WITH LEBANESE POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS, INCLUDING PHALANGE LEADER PIERRE GEMAYEL AND AGREEMENT WAS REACHED ON A TWO STAGE ARMISTICE. STAGE ONE IS THE CEASEFIRE THAT STARTED LAST EVENING STAGE TWO IS A PROMISE BY ALL PARTIES TO HOLD IMMEDIATE QUOTE NATIONAL RECONCILIATION UNQUOTE TALKS THAT WILL INCLUDE THE POSSIBLE EXPANSION OF THE CABINET, THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL QUOTE DEMANDS UNQUOTE OF THE MOSLEM/LEFTIST CAMP, AND PERHAPS ALSO LEBANESE PALESTINIAN RELATIONS.

3. THERE IS CONSIDERABLE DOUBT THAT BASIC PROGRESS WILL BE MADE SOON ON THESE INTRACTABLE ISSUES, BUT AT LEAST THE PARTIES ARE TALKING INSTEAD OF FIGHTING NOW. THE DURABILITY OF THIS MOOD IS OF COURSE DOUBTFUL. ONE VERSION OF THE ARMISTICE TERMS IS THAT IT WILL COVER A LIMITED TRIAL PERIOD ONLY (REPORTS VARY FROM 48 HOURS TO 10 DAYS). BUT A MOSLEM LEADER TOLD EMBOFF SEPT 21 THAT THE TRUCE IS OF INDEFINITE DURATION. A MEETING WILL BE HELD SEPTEMBER 21 AT THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE AT WHICH INTERIOR MINISTER CHAMOUN, PLO LEADER ARAFAT, AND SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM WILL SETTLE THE BASIS OF THE ARMISTICE AND THE INITIAL FRAMEWORK OF THE POLITICAL TALKS.

4. THERE WAS A PERSISTENT RUMOR YESTERDAY THAT CHAMOUN HAD PRESENTED HIS RESIGNATION, THAT HIS SON DORY HAD WITHDRAWN
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FROM THE UNPRODUCTIVE CEASEFIRE TALKS AT INTERNAL SECURITY HQ, TO PROTEST THE GOVERNMENT'S FAILURE TO TAKE STRONGER MEASURE IN THE CRISIS. WE UNDERSTAND CHAMOUN HAD SIGNED AN ORDER FOR ARMY INTERVENTION AND SENT IT TO PRESIDENT FRANGIE, WHO POCKET VETOED IT. HOWEVER, CHAMOUN'S RESIGNATION, IF IT OCCURRED, WAS NOT ACCEPTED. HIS QUOTE RESIGNATION UNQUOTE MAY HAVE BEEN LARGELY A TACTIC TO BRING THE FESTERING ISSUE TO A HEAD AND DEM-

ONSTRATE THE IMPATIENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN SIDE.

5. DEGREE OF SYRIAN INVOLVEMENT NOT RPT NOT CLEAR. KHADDAM
AND SHEHABI MAY BE MERELY CATALYSTS, BUT OFFER OF SYRIAN FORCES
TO POLICE BEIRUT MADE YESTERDAY TO KARAME BROUGHTHOME VIGOR-
OUSLY TO ALL LEBANESE DEPTHS TO WHICH THEY HAVE SUNK. ALLONS
STATEMENT YESTERDAY IMPLYING THAT GOI WOULD NOT TOLERATE
SYRIAN INTERVENTION HAS RECEIVED CONSIDERABLE PRESS
COVERAGE. IT HAS NOT RPT NOT BEEN HELPFUL. (WE REALIZE OF COURSE
FROM FBIS TEXT THAT ALLON WAS SPEAKING IN CONTEXT OF BROAD
INTERVIEW ON MANY QUESTIONS, AND WAS NOT RPT NOT MAKING THREATS
BUT HIS WORDS AS EXTRACTED IN LOCAL PRESS CAUSED CONSIDERABLE
CONCERN AMONG JITTERY LEBANESE,
GODLEY

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NNN

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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